



# Sand Creek Newsletter

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## Spring, 2004 Site Update and Historical Background

Welcome to the first issue of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site Public Newsletter. Many of you have contacted the National Park Service during the last two years through e-mail, letters, phone calls, office visits, and the Kiowa County Fair Booth to express your interest in the Sand Creek Massacre and have patiently awaited the newsletter that we promised. Thanks to the efforts of Park Ranger Craig Moore, the newsletter is finally a reality. In the pages that follow, Craig has provided a mix of articles regarding the status of the development of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, as well as articles that place the current events into historical context, including biographical sketches of some of the people who were there. Additional topics will be explored in future issues. We sincerely hope you find this newsletter informative, and welcome your comments, suggestions, and input. Please feel free to get in touch with us. We are always pleased to hear from people around the world who are interested in this important and tragic event and its lasting commemoration.

**Alexa Roberts,  
Superintendent**



Thanksgiving Day, 2003

### **CHEYENNE RUNNERS, OTHERS ATTEND NOVEMBER CEREMONY AND DINNER**

It was a blustery, typical late November morning when dozens of Northern Cheyenne tribal members gathered at Sand Creek in conjunction with the tribe's annual Healing Run. Others participating in the day's event included representatives of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the National Park Service, and interested citizens from throughout the region. While at the site, Montana drummers sang Chief White Antelope's song. Master of Ceremonies Donald Shoulderblade provided historic information and overall instructions. The morning concluded as approximately a dozen runners circled the site four times before heading down County Roads to Eads, CO.

By noon, most participants had made their way to the High School cafeteria in Eads where a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner was enjoyed by all. Many thanks were expressed to the cooks and others who worked so hard to help assure a bountiful meal and other successful arrangements.

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Norther Cheyennes Robert Baily, left, and Steve Brady at  
Sand Creek during Cheyenne Spiritual Healing Run,

## Sand Creek Natural Resources

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site has joined the Southern Plains Inventory Monitoring Network to receive NPS assistance with natural resources inventories and monitoring projects. Funding for several natural resources management projects will be sought in the near future. Recently, Sand Creek Massacre NHS received a \$10,000 grant from the *Rocky Mountain Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit*, National Park Service. Through contract, Dr. Mark Fiege, Department of History at Colorado State University will conduct baseline research into the historic environmental conditions of Sand Creek. Sand Creek Massacre NHS has also received assistance from the National Park Service Exotic Management Team. Fire Management Agreements have been signed with Kiowa County and Rocky Mountain National Park for assistance with fire management activities. Through the efforts of Fran Pannebaker, Natural Resource staff at Bent's Old Fort NHS, the NPS has secured a \$6,000 Rural Fire Assistance Grant for the Kiowa County Fire Department. The grant will allow Kiowa County to purchase protective clothing. In turn, the County will be able to assist the NPS in the event of fire within the boundaries of the Sand Creek Massacre NHS.

NPS is collecting plant specimens within the Sand Creek site to develop a current plant list. From this list native plants will be maintained and exotics will be managed through NPS Integrated Plant Management (IPM) Program Standards. Within the plant list are two exotic plants which are considered as noxious; tamarisk and Canada thistle.

Additional Resource Projects have been spearheaded by Park Ranger Karl Zimmermann with assistance from a community work crew from the Fort Lyon Correctional Facility in Las Animas, CO. Senator Campbell sent a letter to the Colorado Department of Corrections thanking them for their work in these important efforts.

# John Prowers Family and the Sand Creek Massacre Transferred to

John Prowers arrived in the Arkansas Valley in 1856 as an employee of Indian Agent Robert Miller. Over the course of the next two and a half decades, this Missourian would carve out a niche as a legendary Colorado pioneer. However, it was through his marriage to the young Cheyenne *Ameko'ne* or Walking Woman, that would bring him face-to-face with the tragic events of November, 1864.

*Ameko'ne* became Mrs. John Prowers in 1861, thereafter the Cheyenne woman was known as both *Amache Ochinee* and Amy Prowers – the couple had nine children – Mary, Susan, Katharine, Inez, John Jr., George, Leona, Ida, and Amy. Mrs. Prowers was the daughter of *One Eye* or *Lonebear*. *One Eye* had been active in the summer of 1864, delivering a Cheyenne peace letter to Fort Lyon and subsequently accompanying Major Wynkoop to the Cheyenne village on the Smoky Hill. Later, *One Eye* was with the Cheyenne and Arapaho delegation that attended the council at Camp Weld. In November, after meeting with Major Anthony near Fort Lyon, *One Eye* and other Chiefs spent several nights at Prowers ranch at Caddo Creek, consulted with Prowers, then moved back north to Sand Creek.

Many years after Sand Creek, Prowers' daughter Mary Hudnall recalled: "*On Sunday evening the last week in November about sundown...[the] First Colorado Cavalry...stopped at our ranch...disarmed my father and his seven cowhands, and held them prisoners, not allowing them*

*to leave the house for two days and nights. At the end of that time Captain Cook ordered that he be released. No explanation was offered...we thought it was due to the fact that father had an Indian family."* Mrs. Hudnall's grandfather *One Eye* was among the dead at Sand Creek.

John Prowers Sand Creek testimony was taken at Fort Lyon on March 24, 25 and 27, 1865 by the *Military Commission*. Referring to the meeting at his ranch in November, Prowers stated: "*Black Kettle asked me what I thought of the council [with Major Anthony at Fort Lyon]. I told him that I thought it was all right; that from all I could learn I thought everything favorable...Next morning, before leaving my place, I made them a few presents..."*

In later years, Mr. and Mrs. Prowers moved their family to Boggsville and West Las Animas. By the 1870's cattle carrying Box B and Bar X, the brands of Prowers, ranged over much of Southern Colorado. John Prowers, the first Commissioner of Bent County, and both a Territorial and State Legislature, passed away in February, 1884, his wife Amy died in the winter of 1905 -both are buried in the Las Animas, CO cemetery.

## Bibliography:

*Mary Prowers Hudnall Interview, Early History of Bent County, James R. Harvey, 1945. The Sand Creek Massacre: A Documentary History, New York: Sol Lewis, 1973*



John Wesley Prowers. Namesake of Prowers County, Colorado, and famed pioneer, cattleman, and civic leader. His father in-law *One Eye* was killed at the Sand Creek Massacre,

# Yellow Wolf: "...a Man of Considerable Influence"

Yellow Wolf was over eighty winters old when he was killed at the Sand Creek Massacre. He was long affiliated with the *Hair Rope* band, people who were among the first of his tribe to venture onto the southern plains. Other Chief's of this band at the time of Sand Creek likely included old Whirlwind, Bear Man, and Big Man. George Bent and Porcupine Bear remembered Yellow Wolf as "*Expert in killing buffalo with Bow & Arrow as well as...in catching Wild Horses. The whites considered him head chief of the Southern Cheyennes.*"

In 1845-46 Lieutenant James Abert met Yellow Wolf at Bent's Fort, in his journal the officer described the Chief as "*...a man of considerable influence, of enlarged views, and gifted with more foresight than any other man in his tribe.*"

Yellow Wolf saw the dramatic increase in travel across the plains, to the north, the Oregon Trail, to the south, the road to Santa Fe. Yellow Wolf also witnessed the rush for gold, first to California, then to Colorado. He had been with his people during the great battle with the Kiowa near Wolf Creek, and for decades had raided Ute, Pawnee, Crow, Kiowa, Shoshone, and Comanche horse herds.



The late Vinnie Hoffman. Daughter of White Eagle and Path Heap of Birds. Great Granddaughter of Chief Yellow Wolf. Vinnie and her husband, the late Albert Hoffman, resided near Hammon, OK.

According to George Grinnell, Yellow Wolf's lodge was painted Yellow and "On the lodge covering, to the north and again to the south of the door, were painted two buffalo-bulls, each about two feet high, and standing head to the door, and following each bull were cows. At the back of the lodge... was a red disc, perhaps two and half feet in diameter—the sun- and over this, and just below the smoke-hole, was the morning star, a green disc about ten inches in diameter. Above the door was

a blue crescent moon. The wings and top of the lodge were painted black...with...crosses, indicating stars, on the wings."

Yellow Wolf's family included an adopted son Walking Coyote, and a son Red Moon who led remnants of his father's people into Indian Territory, becoming a namesake for Cheyennes of Hammon, Oklahoma. Chief Red Moon is buried in the Bethel mennonite Cemetery in Roger Mills County, near Hammon.

## Bibliography

***Father Peter Powell, People of the Sacred Mountain, Harper & Row, 1979***

***George Bent to George Hyde, 1914, Coe Collection, Yale University***

***John Gavin, ed., Through the Country of the Comanche Indians in the Fall of the Year 1845, John Howell Books, 1970***

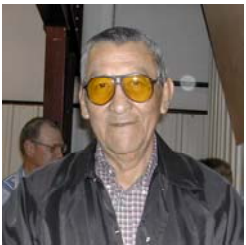
***George Grinnell, The Cheyenne Indians, Cooper Square, 1926***



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## Tribes Playing Major Role in Site Establishment

Tribal Representatives from the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma, the Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming, and the Northern Cheyenne Tribe of Montana have been assisting with the establishment of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. These men and women have been invaluable in meetings as advisors and consultants with the National Park Service, the State of Colorado, Kiowa County, and other partners. In many instances tribal representatives have helped to answer difficult historic questions and have addressed issues of cultural sensitivity. Over the course of several years these people have travelled many times to Eads and Denver, or have hosted the National Park Service in Lame Deer, Montana; Ethete, Wyoming; and Concho, Oklahoma. Each has played a key role in numerous decisions that will greatly impact the present and future of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. Southern Cheyenne Chief Laird Cometsevah (upper left), Southern Arapaho Lee Pedro (lower left), Northern Arapaho Gail Ridgely (upper right), and Northern Cheyenne Mildred "Mustard" Red Cherries (lower right) have been joined by a dozen other Tribal Representatives in their Sand Creek efforts. Mr. Otto Braided Hair, Mr. Steve Brady, Norma Gorneau, and Mr. Lee Lonebear of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe; Mr. Alonzo Sankey of the Southern Arapaho Tribe; Mr. Robert Goggles, Mr. Edward Willow, and Mr. Eugene Ridgely, Sr., of the Northern Arapaho Tribe, and Mr. Joe Big Medicine of the Southern Cheyenne Tribe are others who are playing a major role in site establishment. Additional issues of the Sand Creek Newsletter will acknowledge all of the valuable representatives.





National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site  
910 Wanstead, P.O. Box 249  
Eads, CO 81036

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### Editor

Craig Moore

### Sand Creek Program Assistant

Theresa Horak

### Superintendent

Alexa Roberts

### Contributors

Craig Moore  
Alexa Roberts

### Photographs

State Historical Society of Colorado  
National Park Service

### Comments? Write to:

Craig Moore  
Sand Creek Massacre NHS  
402 Santa Fe Avenue, Suite 104  
La Junta, CO 81050

## Sand Creek

At dawn on November 29, 1864 approximately 800 volunteers of the Colorado Third Regiment and two battalions of the Colorado First Cavalry under the command of Colonel John Chivington attacked a village of Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians. Chiefs Black Kettle, White Antelope, Warbonnet, Yellow Wolf, Left Hand and others were camped along Sand Creek in southeastern Colorado Territory. During the course of the day, the troops killed about 150 people, including many women, children and elderly. The controversy of the campaign, the brutality of the attack, and the atrocities associated with it engendered several Congressional and Military investigations. The committees condemned the actions of Colonel Chivington and most of his officers and troops. Colonel Chivington, his counsel

Major Jacob Downing, and many veterans of Sand Creek defended their role in the affair. In 1883, Chivington, addressing the Colorado Association of Pioneers uttered the words “I stand by Sand Creek.” The Sand Creek Massacre has remained one of the most controversial events in American history.